

Why this Clamour for Presidential form ?

Of late, there has been a spate of debate and speculation in the press and political circles about whether a presidential form of government should be adopted in India. The immediate background which brought this issue to a focus was the two-day all-India conference of lawyers recently held in New Delhi. While inaugurating this conference on 25th, October last, Prime Minister Smt. Gandhi called for a national debate on whether any other form of government is better suited to this country than the present cabinet system. But the idea was not simply to initiate a harmless debate on the subject. From all accounts, the conference, organised by followers of Smt. Ghandhi, was planned to be a stage managed exercise out of which a "consensus" would emerge that the present cabinet form of government adopted from the British system being unsuitable to India, a changeover to the presidential form is desirable. But the plan misfired when, at the concluding session, many delegates protested strongly against the report of the chairman of the sub-committee on the system of government who was one of the organisers, that the "preponderant view" was that the presidential form was better suited to Indian conditions. Since the organisers failed to carry the delegates with them, no resolution to this effect could be adopted. But the conference was made a permanent body to continue debate on systems of government.

This is not the first time that a presidential form of government has been advocated for India. Years back, Mr. J.R.D. Tata, a doyen of the Indian monopolists, noting the growing instability and sensing the danger to the capitalist system arising therefrom, pleaded for the adoption of presidential form of government. We recall too how, before the Emergency, an attempt inspired by the Indira Congress was made to induct presidential form of government which failed due to public resentment. Subsequently, in 1979, when the process of disintegration of the Janata Government set in and the ruling bourgeoisie had no

viable alternative in view, President Sanjiva Reddy and circles close to him raised the question of enhancing the President's powers to instal some form of direct presidential type of government in order to stem the growing political instability.

The urge for adopting the presidential form is not simply the product of power lust of this or that bourgeois politician, but is a reflection in the bourgeois body politic of the growing need of the ruling bourgeoisie to concentrate more and more power in the hands of the executive as a means to stabilise the system and crush mass movements.

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All Bengal Students' Struggle Committee's ultimatum to 'Left Front' Government in West Bengal

[We publish here some salient portions of the Note submitted by the All Bengal Students' Struggle Committee to the Chief Minister of West Bengal against the anti-people language and educational policies it has adopted.

—Ed. P. Era]

This note seeks to bring this fact to your notice that public tolerance has surpassed all limits

because of series of anti-people education policies, specially the language policy of your government. The people in general and the student community in particular have shown rare patience in face of the lukewarm attitude of your government to the burning issues of public life and those playing havoc with the fate and future of the students in the name of reforms in education....

Whatever and however much may you try to convince the people otherwise the very object of your language policy cannot be anything other than to make an all-out affront on language study as is crystal clear from your making both mother tongue and English 'Compulsory optional' in the undergraduate courses.

What does it mean other than striking at the very root of the thinking

faculty of a nation? Is it not in conformity with this mischievous design that the study of literature has been banished from the undergraduate language course in order to cripple the language efficiency and to erode all moral and ethical values? Naturally, your much-vaunted claim to uphold the cause of the mother-tongue tantamounts to a sheer mockery and a simple hoax to the people.

If judged from this backdrop of the attitude

of your government toward the importance of language study, the real intent and purposes of all the arguments against the retention of English will be as clear as daylight. Who does not know that it is not out of any pious wish of a group of high-brow elitists that English has come to enjoy a unique importance in our national life starting from the sphere of trade and commerce, technology and nuclear research and em-

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Com. Nihar Mukherjee's statement on the Election Commission's Recommendations

Strongly protesting against the recommendations of the Election Commission (as reported in the press), Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, has in course of a press statement, said:

"When the facts of Indian politics in recent years have proved beyond doubt that most of the elections today are rigged,

in favour of this or that party whom the ruling bourgeoisie prefer at a given moment to place in power rendering all help not excluding the help of moneybag behind the branded bourgeois or some social democratic parties in pattern with two-party parliamentary system in this country, making a mockery of people's verdict—it is curious that

the Election Commission has assigned this mockery to multiplicity of so-called 'frivolous' candidates who constitute an insignificant part in election and has proposed certain restrictions which, if implemented will offer a severe blow to the basic democratic rights of the people. This observation of the Election Commission, to say (Contd. to page 8)

West Bengal State Secretary's Statement on Foreign Contribution of Funds

Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee, SUCI, has issued the following statement to the press.

"We are astonished to find that some mass organisations connected with our party have been enlisted by the Central Government under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act since so far as we are concerned

the question of getting or the desire of getting foreign contribution does not arise at all.

This very fact cannot but raise a pertinent question as to how far the Central Government is serious in stopping flow of foreign aid, if any, to this country from whatsoever source it may be. Although the list may apparently look impartial

since it has covered wide range of mass organisations starting from the rightist, communalist to the leftist organisations including those connected with our party—it is, in fact, aimed at creating a serious confusion in mass mind as if we are also interested in foreign contribution. But so far as the contention of the Act is concerned, we will be glad to see its strictest implementation, by the Centre."

Constitutional Dictatorship under whatever form spells danger of all out fascism

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Today this growing urge has assumed the proportions of a compulsion, a class-imperative of the bourgeoisie. Emergency was clamped down in the aggregate interest of Indian capitalism as a measure towards fascism for stifling all voices of dissension. But resentment of it grew at such pace that soon there was a real danger of the people rising up in revolt against the hated Emergency, the government, and eventually the capitalist system itself. Therefore, Emergency had to go and Smt. Gandhi too. Almost overnight, the Janata Party was propped up by the bourgeoisie as their next class alternative. The Janata formed the new government at the Centre with a commanding majority in the Lok Sabha. But such is present inherent political instability of the capitalist system in India that even before this ministry's turn was over, the Janata Party was stricken with groupism and squabbles and then rent apart by mass defection. The Janata ministry fell. Next, Charan Singh Ministry. It fell even before it was formed, so to say. Left with no other alternative, the bourgeoisie turned to Smt. Indira Gandhi and brought her back to governmental power by artificially creating a "weeping majority" for her through a total, centralised, administrative rigging of the polls. But even with this, the bourgeoisie have failed to stabilise the situation. Within the short period of ten months of Smt. Gandhi's Ministry, there have been fresh inflation at unprecedented rate and spiralling of prices. Mass disaffection is growing rapidly. Signs of instability within her party are already discernible with groupism and intra-party strifes in many a state. Even with such a large majority in the Lok Sabha, she has not been able to form a full-fledged ministry so far.

The situation is critical and the bourgeoisie must think up some alternative arrangement. The Indian capitalist economy is facing one crisis after another. As our party has pointed out time and again, the extreme economic instability has given rise to political instability. Squabbles, factionalism and infighting are rampant within the bourgeois parties including the Congress (I). Factionalism and defections within legislatures have created a situation when a "stable", overwhelming majority in the legislature today becomes unstable tomorrow. Instability and disaffection have gripped even the coercive instruments of the bourgeois state like the police, BSF, CISF etc. The people, faced with extreme hardships and pauperisation, are giving vent to deep-seated resentment and growing restive.

It is as if the country is sitting on top of a volcano. The bourgeoisie are growing apprehensive. Government by a cabinet dependent upon majority in the legislature has become unwieldy from the bourgeois point of view and increasingly becoming less and less reliable as the instrument of bourgeois class rule. Even rule through preventive detention and ordinances practised by the present West Minister type "democracy" do not suffice now. Fascistic measures are called for. As we have repeatedly pointed out earlier, fascist dictatorship can come through outright scrapping of bourgeois parliamentary structure, or it may even come through amending the constitution while keeping the two-party bourgeois parliamentary system intact, that is, in the form of constitutional dictatorship. Switchover from a loose parliamentary structure to the presidential form, with the concomitant concentration of power in the hands of the executive, can only mean a step in this direction.

The convention of lawyers did not succeed in its objective, but attempts have not been given up. The idea that a presidential form of government is desirable has again been echoed at the meeting of the National Integration Council at New Delhi. Again, at the AICC (I) session in the capital on December 6 last, a switch-over to the presidential form was suggested by several members. This further proves that the Congress (I) is initiating and inspiring the debate in the country on changing the form of government. Through conventions, write ups in the press, discussions etc. forming a so-called national debate, it will be attempted to make the concept of presidential government emerge as the "national consensus" and to secure social sanction behind the projected change.

Whether a presidential government can be imposed very soon or not depends on many factors. But the important thing is that the widespread mass resentment that was witnessed against the naked move towards dictatorship through the Emergency has taught the bourgeoisie and their present political choice, Smt. Gandhi, a lesson or two. They have become circumspect and want to drag the people skilfully towards dictatorship through a "national debate". The endemic crises of the capitalist economy of our country has given rise to ever-present political crisis and instability. A bye product of this has been the totally unethical and corrupt bourgeois politics which has become a widespread social malady. Lack of even the minimum ethics among the bourgeois and petty bourgeois politicians, their continuous shifting of political-ideological stand often for personal gain, bickerings and squabbles for narrow, selfish ends, defection and floor-crossing by legislators—all these have caused

revulsion among the people and eroded whatever trust they had for the present cabinet form of bourgeois parliamentary system. Taking advantage of this, attempts are being made to skilfully channelise public opinion towards acceptance of a presidential form, to confuse the people into thinking that the cabinet form of government has failed, but may be, a presidential form will make for better administration and deliver the goods. By spreading this type of thinking among the intellectuals and by collecting popular opinion in its favour, an apparent public support behind the move to usher in presidential government is being artificially sought to be created so that the shift towards fascistic dictatorship is endowed with some kind of social sanction. This is much more subtle, and crooked too, than the naked authoritarian measures adopted during the Emergency, and bears the stamp of typically skilful fascist tactics.

What should be the tasks of a left, a communist party in this situation? Should it say that since both the cabinet and the presidential forms are but alternatives within the same bourgeois system, there is nothing to choose between them, and therefore drift into inaction? Certainly not. The revolutionary forces still do not have away over the bulk of the masses. Most of the people still have illusions about the existing bourgeois system. Even when they suffer extreme economic hardships and feel resentment, the majority of them think that the set of people currently in government are inefficient or corrupt and hence the peoples' miseries; if they are replaced with better people, or if reforms or change of governmental form are adopted within the present system—the problems in their lives can be solved. Peoples' resentment still lacks class conscious revolutionary direction against the capitalist system itself which

is the root cause of all their problems and miseries. Therefore, step by step, through various movements, the toiling people should be made to shed illusions about the bourgeois parliamentary system and imbued with revolutionary class consciousness. Only in this way can the foundation of revolution be laid in the country. During this process, use must be made of the various bourgeois institutions, to the respective extents possible, to create conducive atmosphere for the democratic movements but with an eye to helping the people to shed illusion about the very same institutions. That is why a revolutionary can never support a move like doing away with the cabinet form of bourgeois democracy in favour of a presidential form with the attendant concentration of power. Therefore, the task today for a revolutionary, a communist, is to refuse to be drawn into the debate about the merits and demerits of the two bourgeois forms of government, build up a countrywide movement against the conspiracy to induct a presidential form of government and to staunchly strive to free the people from illusions about any alternative within the capitalist system. It is not possible even to mitigate significantly, not to speak of solving the problems besetting the peoples' lives within the present set-up. This is the basic point. But all the parties in government serving the crisis-ridden capitalism, including the pseudo-lefts like the CPI(M), are trying to divert attention of the masses from this. In the hope of keeping the masses confined within the present system, they are on the one hand creating illusions about solving the problems within the existing set-up, while on the other they are strengthening the coercive organs of the bourgeois state and concentrating more and more power in the executive and the administration in preparation for confrontation.

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"Farmers' Agitation"— In whose interest ?

The 'farmer's agitation which originally started in Nasik District and now spread over to entire Maharashtra, Gujrat and other states bears much significance in the national economy and politics.

Bourgeois press gives wide coverage and calls it 'emergence of peasant power', sympathy for and active support come from the President and the Prime Minister. All the bourgeois parties and even the parties calling themselves 'Marxist' are in competition as to who best can support the demands and serve the cause. Amidst the din and bustle, the most relevant question to the common people is which class interest this agitation and its demands serve. Will they benefit the rural poor and middle class or their exploiter, the jotedars ?

Agitator's Demands

The issues centring which the present agitation started in Nasik District in Maharashtra under the leadership of Sharad Joshi, once a united Nations Official and his 'Shetkari Sanghatana' a remunerative prices for agricultural commodities in general and for sugarcane and onions in particular, the prices of which they demand are to be raised to Rs. 300 per tonne and Rs. 100 per quintal, this year, parity and balance of trade between agricultural and industrial commodities, liberalisation of exports of agricultural commodities, moratorium on debt repayment of loans from official financial institutions like banks and cooperatives but significantly not from private money lenders in the villages.

In support of these demands, Mr. Sharad Joshi, the spokesman of the agitation says that the Indian planners have all along deliberately refused to give remunerative prices to agricultural produce to protect the interests of industrial users of raw materials. And it is a deliberate policy, a legacy from the British period. "Urban India", he argues, "continues to colonize rural Bharat" and exploit it to the detriment of balance of trade between agriculture and industry. He does not take the pain, however, to explain as to whether such parity between the prices of agricultural and industrial commodities in capitalist

economies, anywhere, whether in the internal home markets or in the international market does actually exist. The fact is that it does not exist even in the advanced capitalist countries and the international market.

Governments' response and the concessions offered

It is the common experience of the people that the governments whether at the Centre or in the states are not only unsympathetic to their just and legitimate demands but what is more, they bring down savage police repression on the legitimate democratic movements. To contain common people's organised movements, they all are arming themselves with extraordinary anti-democratic acts and measures like the notorious National Security Act and Essential Services Maintenance Act, Special Tribunal for summary trials etc. And in this respect, the Central Government and other State Governments run by Congress (I) to CPI (M) all fall in line.

But this time, in marked difference in attitude, both the Central government and the government of Maharashtra readily granted substantial concessions. For example, sugarcane price was raised from Rs. 13 per quintal fixed by the Agricultural Price commission to Rs. 19 or Rs. 20. So also, onion price which due to bumper crop would have fallen to Rs. 25 a quintal has been

raised due to governments efforts to Rs. 45 to Rs. 60 a quintal. Besides, some other concessions including raising twice in a single season the price of cottons grant of cooperative credits etc. have been announced.

Is it a 'movement' on just demands of the peasants ?

Let alone the bourgeois parties like the Congress(I), Congress (U), Lokdal, Janata Party, BJP even the CPI and CPI(M) who are with these parties while actively supporting and participating in the agitation paint it as a 'peasant movement'. From their strong advocacy for the demand of price increase of crops and political stand they would like the common people believe that these demands if conceded will benefit them and the entire rural community in particular. Does this claim has any bearing with reality ? Can we call the agitation a mass movement meaning a movement of the exploited peasantry ? These are the cardinal questions which deserve critical analysis.

The question to start with is what do we mean by the word 'movement'. Should any and every collective action or agitation be defined as a movement ? In that case a collective action or programme of reactionaries of the communalists, racists, parochialists, the exploiters become a movement. Our country had to witness this type of collective actions of the reactionaries in the past and even does so at present. Will any sane mind call them 'movements' deserving social support ? Even the fact that politically unconscious and unorganised masses of people joined in such collective pressure tactics of the reactionaries does not alter its basic character, more so, as we know, without mass involvement even the counter-revolutionary upsurges are not possible.

History of fascism and all other counter-revolutions bears testimony to this fact.

The basic factor therefore essential for a collective action to be a mass movement—a movement for social progress, for establishing social justice, is its democratic content in as much as it is directed against the exploiting class, against its various efforts to set impediments to social development and progress.

Judged from this elementary understanding about class approach to mass movement, the agitation that is going on in the name of "peasants' interest" can be called a movement if it is seen that it represents the interests, in the main, of the agricultural labourers, the share-croppers, the poor peasants and even the middle peasants who are exploited by the jotedars and vested interests. If close examination reveals just the reverse then can we at all call it a mass movement or for that matter mass movement of the peasantry, by which term the left and democratic forces have so long meant a movement on behalf of and by the rural poor and middle class ?

The CPI and CPI(M) are saying that if the crop prices increase, simply by that the rural poor and the middle class will be benefitted along with the rich peasants that is to say, the whole peasantry or the entire rural community will be benefitted. It is not difficult to understand that this very hope acted as the driving force even for the poor peasants to rally behind this agitation in a situation when they are not politically conscious and not organised in a militant organisation of their own. But what is the real picture ? Anybody having minimum knowledge about rural life knows it very well that in our country the poor peasantry is doubly exploited. In the countryside during the harvesting season i.e. when the new crop comes to the market, the bulk of the poor peasants, share-croppers, lower and even a section

of middle peasants are forced to sell their produce at a very low price which is generally known as "distress sale"—whatever may be the price announced by different governments. During the last more than 33 years since independence no government has been able to save poor peasantry from this curse. Then again, during the lean season when they are forced to purchase rice etc. from the market they are to pay a very high price i.e. black market price and the government simply acts the role of a dumb spectator.

So if the rural poor cannot force the government not only to declare reasonable price for the agricultural produce but also to guarantee that not a single peasant is compelled to take recourse to "distress sale" which is taken advantage of by the unscrupulous big private traders from behind. Poverty of the ordinary peasant and absence of a suitable purchasing machinery run by the government, are the concrete conditions now. Therefore, the increase in the price of the agricultural produce will only benefit those big unscrupulous traders who have practically established their monopoly in this rural field also.

The character of the Agitations and the demands

The CPI and CPI(M) are in this 'farmers' agitation' and calls it a 'peasant movement'. But does not the mere perusal of the demands indicate the real class character of these farmers ? For, who are the peasants that want moratorium of debt repayment to bank, cooperative and such like government institutional loans ? Are they the sharecroppers, poor peasants or the rural poor ? But why not is there the demand for debt redemption of village money lenders' loans which the left kisan fronts have been demanding for long ? Is it not because of the fact that those who are demanding moratorium on bank and co-

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Students' Struggle Committee's Ultimatum

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ployment down to that of higher education, of cultivating higher and intricate thoughts in the realm of science and epistemology as well as in strengthening the bond of unity amongst the people, specially in a multi-lingual country like ours, while helping us in keeping abreast with the everchanging international situation? Gathering in the minds are mists of suspicion since primary English medium schools are found to be mushrooming hither and thither in the state, aided and abetted by your government and that you are keen on creating an artificial division among the people into two classes of citizens. Is it not the height of hypocrisy on your part to send the children of your ministers to the English medium schools, while advocating in the same breath the abolition of the teaching of English for the children of the people at large?

Much as you have tried in your bid to pursue the people into your contention by prattling about universal education, but the cat has come out of the bag the moment you have declared your nefarious plan of introducing the "no detention policy" upto class five, which will result in the farther decline of the standard of primary education. What kind of government it is, feeling not the slightest scruple in playing such a treacherous game with the people, aimed at reducing the primary education to a simple farce?...

People in thousands from all walks of life have over and over again been lodging their protests against the above mentioned anti-people policies of your government. The teachers, guardians, educationists have been engaging themselves in waging movements; even the women did not lag behind. Under the leadership of our committee the students made their pro-

tests known through holding innumerable conventions as on the 17th and 18th July, 1979 in Calcutta University Centenary Hall.

The streets of Calcutta were paraded by thousands of students on 19th September 1979, 12th and 26th September 1980 by thousands of students, expressing their vehement indignation. They came to express their grievances personally to you as the leader of the government. But not to speak of showing the minimal courtesy to meet the students, you have not felt the slightest compunction to trample all public opinion underneath. One cannot but consider such an attitude on the part of your government to be a challenge against the people. Here, let us remind you of the long and glorious tradition of mass movement in West Bengal. It is not unknown to you how many a battle has been fought here, hallowing the soil of the state in profusion of blood to rise in bold defiance against the anti-people policies of the rulers both during the days of anti-imperialist movement and afterwards. Let it be declared in unequivocal terms that the time is overdue to take up the cudgels against you on behalf of the students community and to warn that if you still remain to be unyielding to the pressure of public opinion, behaving just like a despot and are found to be reluctant in mending your decision within second January '81, the students along with the vast sections of the right thinking population are prepared to plunge head long into a mightier phase of movement, a death defying battle, the sole onus and responsibility of which will rest entirely upon you. Remember, the students of West Bengal have not forgotten...to shed blood, do not forget. they know how to embrace martyrdom for a noble cause; they know how to make the deaf hear.

Protest meeting against illegal closure of mines in Sukinda

Sukinda Orissa 24.12.80— A meeting of mining workers was held on 24th December, 1980 attended by more than a thousand workers, protesting and condemning the mischievous move of M/s J. C. Budharaja, contractor, Kalarangi Chromite Mines, 'E' quarry to close down the mines.

It was addressed by Comrade Tapas Dutta president and Comrade Mayadhar Nayak General Secretary, Sukinda Upatyaka Mines Workers Union [affiliated to UTUC (Lenin Sarani)]. Com. Tapas Dutta in the course of his speech demanded the take over of the mines directly by the Orissa Mining Corporation Limited, employment to all the present workers of the mines and increased rate of wages. It may be recalled that, J.C. Budharaja the contractor has been unscrupulously pressurising and intimidat-

ing the workers since the union placed the demand charter of Kalarangi workers on 17th march 1980, demanding increased rate of wages and other legal benefits. He has since then consistently and persistently resorted to all foul means to sabotage the bipartite negotiations and the conciliation through Assistant Labour Commissioner (Central). The present sinister move of the contractor to close down the union is highly arbitrary, coercive and illegal.

Comrade Tapas Dutta in his speech said that workers under the leadership of Sukinda Upatyaka Mines Workers Union have fought heroically and won their legitimate demands in the past and they shall fight against the unjust move of the contractor this time also and shall stand united to win their legitimate demands.

Mass Squatting in Monghyr District of Bihar

The peasants and workers along with the students and the youth of Havelikharapur in Monghyr District of Bihar have been conducting movements for redressal of their legitimate demands under the leadership of the SUCI. A mass squatting programme was organised in front of the BDO and Forest office on November 21 last with the demands like removal of the police camp at Shyampur, withdrawal of false cases against Comrades Binode Kumar Mondal and Jangal Mazdoor, disciplinary action against the Manager of the Gramin Bank, immediate stoppage of corrupt practices by dealers of ration shops, restoration of rights to the real share-croppers in place of the fake ones etc. etc. On that day a big procession paraded the main thoroughfares of the town and assembled in front of the BDO office where the gathering was addressed by

leaders like Comrades Sukdeo Yadav, Anil Kumar, Kashikanto Pathak, Naresh Tanti and others. The squatting continued till night. Many women participated in the squatting. On the pressure of the movement the BDO was compelled to concede some of the demands and assured the delegation to refer other demands to the higher authorities. After that the squatting was withdrawn.

Labour Department-management Conspiracy in Rajgangpur Spinning Mill, Orissa

Comrade S. K. Quasim, General Secretary, Orissa Spinning Mills Workers' Union, Rajgangpur, Orissa in course of his press statement has strongly condemned the labour department of the state which is giving all underhand help and support to the management to deprive the workers of their legitimate demands. It is worth noting that a charter of demands of the workers is now pending

Protest meeting at Bokaro against Police Atrocities

Bokaro Steel City, Bihar December, 7:

The local unit of SUCI organised today a protest meeting against the brutal police firing on the peaceful spectators of the football match final held between BSF and a team of USSR on 30. 11. 80 at Mohan Kumar Mangalam Stadium. The tournament was organised by the management of Bokaro Steel Project. As a result of this police savagery more than ten persons died and several hundreds received serious injuries, according to eye witness report. Moreover, the stampede that occurred when people in a rush tried to leave the Stadium to escape police lathis, teargas shells and bullets killed and injured many more.

What is to be noted here is that not to speak of the branded bourgeois parties even those who call themselves left, the CPI, the CPI(M) did not raise even a serious voice of protest against this police barbarity on innocent spectators. Only on 3rd the six party combination fulfilled its responsibility by staging a token silent black flag demonstration before the office of the SP. when it was their duty to organise the people to rise in bold protest against the police monstrosity and force the administration to give exemplary punishment to the guilty police personnels.

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in the conciliation proceeding. It was submitted by the majority and representative union of the workers. Defying all norms and relevant laws, the department is extending this help to the management.

In the statement the Orissa Government has been asked to intervene in the matter to foil the illicit collusion between the labour department and the management.

Bhagalpur—not only shocking but a Challenge to human Conscience

That medieval barbarity is very much part of the police ways in this country is a fact of the people's life here. However, the police atrocity is assuming such monstrous proportions day by day as in Bhagalpur, Maldah or elsewhere under patronage, indulgence, or even at direct instigation of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties in power, or in opposition, that organized brutality reminiscent of Hitler's S. S. troops seem to be the 'police-order' of the day.

The horrors of Indira Gandhi's Emergency rule have not faded out. The crimes of Kanpur, Bailadila and Panthnagar by the police under the Janata Government are still vivid in memory. The police rampage at Narainpur in UP and Parasbigha and Dohiya in Bihar at the start of the new governance by Indira Gandhi, those at Marichjhanpi and Islampur in West Bengal under the CPI(M) led 'Left Front' Government, or the Rajan case under the previous coalition government in Kerala define the growing pattern in the police style and methods. But the latest, the ghastly crimes in Bhagalpur testify to the police character in our country more than anything before.

In Bhagalpur (Bihar), the custodians of law, in their true tradition, arrogated to themselves as arbiters and executors. They apprehended persons—accusing that they were criminals—decided on how these persons were to be 'taught a lesson', and taught them the lesson.

The lesson was that the police thrust needles into their eyes, scooped out the eyes and poured acid into the sockets, deliberately blinding them for good. The Bhagalpur central jail today abound in under-trial prisoners blinded by the police in this way.

Some of these blinded prisoners had sent petitions to the Bhagalpur sessions judge, along with certificates from the jail doctor, asking for free legal aid so that they could tell the court about the police atrocities. They had also 'specifically named the police officers who had blinded them'. The sessions judge, it is repor-

ted, dispensed justice by rejecting the prayer on the plea that no such provision existed in the criminal procedure code. The judge, however, left unanswered the petitioners question if the same code empowered "policemen to blind people".

For more than one year now the police have been carrying on this operation, the news of which came to light only some few weeks back. Evidences make it clear that the highest police officials and the administration were aware of the crime for long. But the Bihar Government maintained silence all along. When leaking out of the news of this ghastly crime evoked sweeping public reaction and condemnation, the press came out with coverage in some details. And only at this point, when the Bhagalpur police crime had turned into a national focal point did the Congress (I) Government open its mouth, trying to underplay the matter and saying that there were 31 such blinded undertrial prisoners, although some press reports put the figure at 87.

No words are strong enough to condemn this abominable police crime. The police can arrest persons on reasonable evidences, bring charges against them and institute cases in courts of law. But the police cannot sit on judgement, cannot torture or assault the accused, as is the entrenched habit of theirs in this country. Such abuse of power is no norm of the civilized world. Such offence is more than barbarity. It is the police way in fascist states.

The Congress (I) Governments at the Centre

and the state now use, some condemnation words for fear of public reprisal, Indira Gandhi has shed 'tears' on the parliament's floor for the blinded prisoners. But what does embolden the police to show such audacity becomes clear from the government's anxiety to exonerate and shield the police. The Bihar Chief Minister has even said: "except criminals nobody has said that the police have done it". Then the people, the press and supreme court judges are criminals and, in the Chief Minister's judgement, the police and their patrons in the government are the innocent! The Chief Minister is also trying to sell that the prisoners were blinded "by the people" and not by the police.

The Union Information and Broadcasting minister, too, has suggested that the Bhagalpur police crimes should have been hushed up 'in the interests of police and administrative morale'. Indeed, such pleadings come galore today not only from the Congress (I) leaders but from the CPI(M) leaders, too. But what for should be the 'police and administrations' morale? For using lathis and bullets on democratic mass movements and protecting the 'criminals' in the uniform?

It is no wonder, therefore, that two of the police officials suspended by the State Government were 'actually decorated for gallantry even while their guilt in the Bhagalpur monstrosity was known to the authority.

The calculated stand of the government leaves no one in doubt about the complicity of the police-criminals with those in the highest offices of the government. The opposition parties, including the so-called 'lefts' have pleaded in the parliament to view the issue above politics. But who in this country does not know today that all these parliamentary parties, whether

ruling or opposition, are in complicity with the police and hang on them to fulfil their petty party and parliamentary interests? Was it not an allegation of the policemen themselves who had revolted last year against the authorities? Even now the people of Bhagalpur as also policemen are demanding arrest of a state minister of Bihar who is known to be a patron of a big gang of criminals.

It is public knowledge today that the anti-socials, criminals and the police are on the rampage with direct patronage from these parties and leaders. The 'Bhagalpur bandh' jointly sponsored by the youth Congress (I) and the BJP against suspension of police officials is a glaring evidence.

It does hardly astonish, therefore, that with direct indulgence, assurance and patronage of the government and these hypocrite, opportunist parties, the policemen in Bihar have started an agitation against the suspension order on some of their colleagues. In fact, all these parties who are out in the open today to defend the interest of the ruling capitalist class plunged in all-out crisis and who are increasingly getting alienated from the people in the process, are depending more and more on the police force and the bureaucracy. They find it essential to crush the people's legitimate democratic mass movements when they are in the government or use them against the people to foment communal and parochial frenzies, or rig elections as has now become the usual feature of the election process in this country. Emboldened thus policemen now think that they are above law. This they did in Islampur in West Bengal by scoffing at the transfer orders served by the government. This they are now doing in Bihar.

The Bhagalpur incidents have set off today all the discussions on the

police ways. But who does keep account of the countless cases of deliberate murder by the police of political prisoners inside the jail and hushing up of records, or of killings of political workers and common people outside on some plea or other by the police?

On many previous occasions we discussed the class character of the police organ and the colonial legacy in particular of the Indian police. The ghastly police crime at Bhagalpur certainly requires exemplary and deterrent punishment to the guilty police officials and bearing of all financial burden and responsibilities of the affected families by the government. It is also necessary to institute a non-official impartial inquiry into the case.

But the danger is growing far more. Instances of such ghastly crimes are not confined within the limits of Bhagalpur. Deliberate blinding has also been reported from Malda district in West Bengal. Significantly where the blow comes squarely on the Congress (I) the CPI(M) is vociferous. And where the CPI(M) Government is accountable, the Congress (I) is trying to reap dividends. In no cases, neither the Congress (I) nor the CPI(M), is showing a genuine indication to take prompt and stern measures against the culprits. Each shows interest only in blaming the other. What more evidence does one require to realize the identity of approach between the two parties to such a grave crime!

Stern measures must be taken against the culprits. But more needed is strong, conscious people's movement. The people must realize that only organized mass movement can check this growing tendency of ghastly police crimes.

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operative loans are the rich farmers or jotedars and to them the village poor and middle class are in perpetual bondage of indebtedness?

Then again, who are the peasants that want export of their product to overseas markets with liberal subventions from the government lest bumper production creates glut in the home market and consequent reduction in prices? Are they the marginal farmers who have no surplus to sell or the lower middle peasants who even if there is small surplus, because of no holding power are forced to sell their produce much below the price even fixed by the government? Is it not a fact that the distress sale of the produce whether of the poor and distressed peasants or of the sharecroppers and even lower or middle peasants are to the benefit of the rich farmers jotedars who either resell them in the home market at blackmarket prices, that is, prices much higher than those fixed by the government or export to overseas markets to reap super profits? For the peasants who are to make distress sale of their produce, the increase in prices of agricultural produce is rather a cruel joke; for, the real question to them is to get the remunerative price for their produce which is denied to them and it is the rural rich or jotedars who cheat them doubly, as has been mentioned before. So, higher price for agricultural produce will ensure still higher margin of profit to the rich farmers. How can these two diametrically opposite interests of the exploiter and exploited be defined as one and unified whole? It is, therefore, clear that the present agitation of the 'farmers' is in reality an agitation of the rural rich, the exploiters, the jotedars and these "farmers" do not represent the interest of the agricultural labourers, poor peasants, share-croppers or even the middle peasants. Common people should clearly understand the real meaning of the

Behind the talk of "farmer's cause" CPI and CPI(M) defend the Joteders

term "farmer" here and should not confuse it to include the rural poor.

Capitalist law of production in Indian Agriculture

When the CPI and CPI (M) therefore talk of unity of whole peasantry, of interests of the entire rural community, they in fact deny the reality of capitalist character of agriculture in our country and consequently the sharp class struggles going on in the country between the exploited rural labourers, sharecroppers and poor peasants and the rural rich or the jotedars. They defend actually the interests of the jotedars by spreading the untruth among the exploited that they have community of interest with that of their enemy, the jotedars notwithstanding their verbal fight against the jotedars, in platform lectures or wall writings. That is why they are all eager to help the jotedars in the name of giving "remunerative prices to the growers" of agricultural produce when it is not unknown to them that the real growers of crops are being savagely exploited by these rich farmers or jotedars.

This brings us to the economic and political reality of rural economy of our country. Analysing it, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has shown: "the nature and character of our rural economy today has been transformed mainly into capitalist economy based on capitalist relation of production... governed by profit making motive and owner and wage-earner relationship. ... There are both owner and wage-earners. Some workers are getting their emoluments as daily wages. There are also some who get a portion of their salary in kind of food and the rest in money, some others the entire wage as share of crop. So whatever the variation in form, all of them are nothing but wage-earners.

... The fundamental law of capitalism is to get profit by investing capital whether in land or in industry. That is investment of capital for production and raising further capital by selling the produce in the market." And so agricultural produce that comes as surplus in the market is "nothing but commodities of national capitalist market", prices of which "are controlled by Share Markets, Wholesale Market and Stock Exchange". The owners of land who produce to market the surplus produce are selling at prices fixed by these agencies and extract profit. "Land has" therefore, been transformed into a means of investment of capital, in the form of money capital just as in industry for earning profit." So, judged from the teachings of Lenin, that it is the nature and character of trade and commerce governing the production of agricultural commodities that determines mainly the character of agricultural economy, therefore, should not leave anybody in doubt as to the capitalist character of a rural economy of our country.

Here, concentration of land in the hands of few jotedars or rural rich, swelling number of landless agricultural labourers and semi-proletariat having tiny patches of land, land far less than what can provide bare subsistence and finally, marketable agricultural produce in the possession and control of the jotedars having been transformed into agricultural commodities in the national capitalist market, conclusively prove the capitalist character of agricultural economy—denied only by those who stand for the jotedars and confuse the rural poor by misdirecting their struggle.

Although fact of life is enough evidence still we may quote the latest figure available in this connection for those who confuse the main issue.

According to the Rural Labour Enquiry of 1974-75, 60% of rural households and slightly over half of the rural population are "agricultural labour" households. Included in this category are the poor peasants who depend substantially and permanently on wage labour. The rest 25% is constituted by rural artisans, workers and employees working in urban sector and the middle peasant (18% of rural households). The remaining 15% are the richest rural households in agricultural community. It is this class of jotedars with mere 23.5% of total rural population holds 70-80% of rural assets and total land area (whether operated or owned).

CPI and CPI(M) stand for Jotedars' class interests

However much they talk to the contrary, CPI and CPI(M) stand actually for the jotedar's interests as is evident not only from their political alignment and concrete moves in the rural field and even by their association in the present agitation of the rich farmers lobby under the smoke-screen of "broadest possible unity of the peasantry".

How can they plead for increase in government subsidies for the rich farmers? Are they so naive as to believe that these benefits will percolate downwards to the rural poor and middle class when in reality those will be monopolised by the jotedars? Do they not know that the steep price rises of agricultural commodities since the Sixties did not bring any relief to the agricultural labourers, share-croppers, poor peasants and even the middle peasants but went entirely to the benefit of the capitalists? Is it not a fact that even the various government surveys and ILO reports confirm that despite so-called 'Green Revolution' the real income of the rural poor and more particularly

of the rural labour declined actually? Is it not a fact that the number of agricultural labourers is increasing alarmingly? Is it not a fact that despite these increases in prices of agricultural produce 70% of country's population is now below 'poverty line'? Then to whom the benefits have gone, the benefits of price increase of produce, government loans, tax reliefs, subsidies and subventions? Just to give an inkling of idea about the swindle that is going on in the name of rural development and "upliftment of the peasants" let us quote just a few figures based on the year, 1971 upto which they are available.

In that year, 15% of rural rich households of the jotedars were responsible for 55% gross capital expenditure in farm business and 59% of non-farm business. It is they who commanded 67% of fixed capital formation on farm business as a whole and 82% on improved agricultural implements. As for their share in 'agricultural development' let it be stated that they made 68% of all expenditures on agricultural implements, 64% on wells and 78% on other forms of irrigation. [Figures from All India Debt and Investment Survey.]

And for this performance, the jotedars got all the help and support of the governments both of 'rightist' and 'leftist' varieties who are now in a race to woo the support from the rural vote banks and money power of this class. The CPI(M) and CPI both are placating this class, serving it in every possible way in their bid to appear as the 'national alternative' of the capitalist class.

Long ago, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our revered leader and teacher exposed the political trickeries of these parties in telling language which may seem prophetic today. Comrade Ghosh said: "... if they consider that our revolution is Peoples' Democratic (or National Democratic Editor) then whatever

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SUCI demands all out State Trading in food and other essential commodities

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slogans they may raise from platform speeches, however 'militant' struggles they may conduct, it is sure that from the very class alignment of their People's Democratic Revolution, they will develop sympathy for and unity with the rich peasants in the villages. Consequently, the peasants' movements they conduct, will inevitably come under the firm grip and influence of the rich peasants. To assume Indian revolution to be peoples' democratic will lead them either to hobnob with the rich peasants this way or that way or to make adventure. This will not serve the purpose. Rather by this, the class struggle of the poor and landless peasants and agricultural labourers against the rich peasants who are the mainstay of capitalism in the rural economy, will be weakened and the interests of the agricultural labourers will be sacrificed at the feet of the rich peasants".

Crux of the problem—correct path

From the concrete facts and events common people can well understand that in the name of rural development or support price to the growers and various other government financial and fiscal helps, the rich farmers or the jotedars have amassed their wealth and consolidated their political power.

After the increase in prices of agricultural produce the benefit of which is monopolised by the jotedars, the industrialists also increase the prices of manufactured products. They also demand and extract government helps in various forms. All these lead to general price rise or inflation, the victims of which have been the poor and middle class people both in urban and rural sectors whose real wage has been suffering continuous erosion.

But most savage part of the capitalist exploitation is that mounting tax burden has been thrust on them to provide money to the governments, an ever-growing porportion of which goes to different sections of the capitalist class. Rising taxes and rising prices are the twin weapons which the ruling capitalist class foists on the common people a most-excruciating burden of exploitation at this stage of third intense general crisis.

Our party SUCI, in this concrete background urges upon the toiling people to rally behind their real movement initiated and is being conducted by us in most of the states on these burning problems in people's life. And 4th November's Delhi Protest March has added a glorious chapter in the history of democratic mass movement of our country.

We are demanding on behalf of the toiling people that all-out state trading in food grains and other essential articles of consumption is the only concrete measure that can ensure just price to the rural poor and middle class for their produce and at the same time it can save the poor and middle class from speculative price manipulations by the capitalists.

This measure will entail both the government at the Centre and in the states to take the responsibility of monopoly procurement of food grains and other essential articles and distribution of those through wide-spread public distribution system. It alone can break the evil chain of jotedars-traders-police—anti-socials which rules the roast in the rural economy.

Not only the bourgeois parties but even CPI(M), CPI oppose this movement because it hurts the interests of the capitalists whose patronage they need to fulfil their ambition

in parliamentary politics. But it is the countrywide battle between the exploited common people and the exploiting capitalist class. On the side of the exploited stands, only SUCI, the real revolutionary party of the prole-

Mighty wave of Democratic Mass Movement can only stall the bourgeois move

(Contd. from Page 2)

tation with the toiling masses.

In order to deceive and confuse the people, the bourgeois press with fanfare, is posing the question as West Minister system versus the Presidential system—as if this is the real issue. The ruling class would like to get the intellectuals and the masses involved and bogged down into constitutional debates regarding the pros and cons of the two arrangements of the same capitalist system while it pursues its class aim of moving towards fascism. Instead of laying bare this bourgeois design and the hollowness, the deception of the whole exercise, what are the CPI and the CPI(M) doing? We find them joining in this West Minister system versus Presidential system debate with gusto, proclaiming the great virtues of the former. Some of their leaders have even penned articles the burden of which is that although our constitution is not ideal and has its shortcomings, such inadequacies can be overcome within the present arrangement without amending it to bring about a presidential form of government! This, when the present Westminster type cabinet system is practising authoritarianism through preventive detention and ordinance Raj! The CPI(M) ought to know because the ministry led by it in Tripura, through an enactment, introduced detention without trial or even framing of charges against the detained in that state. This was a forerunner of the black National Security Ordinance that was introduced

later on all India plane by Smt. Gandhi's Government. The CPI(M) led governments in the three states administered by them are crushing mass movements with the same ruthlessness as the Congress (I) Governments. No, their defence of the "sacred" Westminster type of government is not born out of love for democracy. The leaders of the pseudo-left parties are past masters in manoeuvres of parliamentary politics. They are closely watching the situation. They find the phenomena of today's absolute majority in the legislature fizzling out tomorrow and everchanging alignments, grouping and regrouping emerging for gains in parliamentary politics. They are biding time in the hope of an opportune moment when they can cash in on this instability and make political gains, provided the present cabinet form of government continues. The six party combination formed by them in association with such "progressive" forces as the Congress (U) and the Lok Dal is an instrument to achieve this objective. They may occasionally make a show of movement or organise a bundh to utilise mass discontent in strengthening their position and gaining manoeuvreability in parliamentary politics. But they cannot go in for a sustained movement because such a movement might snowball, get out of hand and generate mass forces of which, as parties of the establishment, they are mortally afraid. Whatever they might profess for public consumption, the pseudo-lefts are in practice avoiding confront-

tation with the bourgeois state and its chief caretaker, the Central Government. The six-party combination had earlier announced a programme of mass demonstration in the capital in the third week of November. But just at the time when our party, the SUCI, was holding the historic protest march in Delhi on November 4, they deliberated again and decided to postpone the proposed demonstration. The CPI(M) representative Harkishan Singh Surjeet's plea that the peasants cannot be mobilised during harvesting was accepted and the demonstration was called off on this pretext!

When the task of the hour is to give a thorough exposure to the hoax, the bourgeois design underlying the debate on change of governmental form that is being sought to be imposed and to build up formidable mass movements in the country, parties like the CPI(M) are not bringing out the real issues before the masses but are themselves getting involved in the debate thereby breeding parliamentary illusions among the people. One may recall that when a similar debate was initiated by the Congress (I) just before the Emergency, the CPI and the CPI(M) joined in that debate in the very same fashion!

Conventions, constitutionalism, debates and legal quibbles cannot resist the move towards outright authoritarianism. The only guarantee against the nefarious bourgeois design is in sustained mass movements and peoples' organised combatibility gained through these. It is the duty of every revolutionary to seize the opportunity offered by the crisis and instability in the bourgeois system, organise the masses on the anti capitalist base political line and build up the peoples' own instruments of struggle, the people's committees, as a precursor to emergence of the peoples' own political power. Today, the historic task of undertaking this has fallen upon our party, the SUCI. The SUCI is emerging before the people as their own alternative, the revolutionary alternative on the national plane.

Kerala

Cowardly attacks on AIDS by SFI in Kerala on the increase

SFI's attacks on AIDS workers in Kerala has become almost an everyday affair.

SFI has let loose a reign of terror with the help of CITU and is attacking all who oppose them, particularly AIDS.

AIDS whose support is increasing among the students in an unprecedented manner and the fact that even many sincere SFI elements are joining AIDS giving up SFI's deceptive politics has alarmed the SFI leadership and since they have no ideological weapon to combat the politics of AIDS, they are resorting to physical assaults.

On November 1st, 1980 Comrade Cleetus, the Unit Secretary of FMN College, Quilon and Comrade Jose were severely beaten by SFI workers in FMN College. The Comrades were trying to mobilise students to protest against the assault of a student by a transport officer.

On November 3rd, again these Comrades were beaten, that too in front of the principal of the college.

On November 5th Comrades Madhavan Poth and Jose P. Koshy of Arts College Trivandrum were assaulted by SFI workers of that college. The SFI workers snatched away the DSO leaflets that the Comrades were distributing and tore them off. Mr. Koshy Mathew who is a teacher in university college and a CPI(M) worker caught Comrade Jose Koshy while he was distributing leaflets and dragged him in the midst of SFI workers and told them to 'take care of him' and 'treat him' and 'treat him properly and even beat him' if he worked for DSO again.

On November 29th, CITU goondas attacked Comrade Lal in Chirayinkil, Trivandrum District from behind. They struck him

with an iron rod on the head and left him unconscious. He was later removed to hospital by people who gathered there.

On December 3rd, Comrades Jaise Joseph, Manoj and Rajagopala Panicker, all important members of Changanacherry area council of AIDS were beaten by SFI workers of C.M.S. College Kottayam while they were selling 'Aragami', the AIDS publication.

Comrade Ramesh Kumar, a DSO worker in Model High School, Trivandrum was surrounded by SFI workers and severely beaten in his school because, leaving SFI he joined DSO. Comrade Ramesh Kumar had resigned from SFI due to its anti-student policies and joined AIDS.

The students in the state are seeing how SFI leaders and workers are behaving just like police and letting loose a reign of goondism. They are also seeing how AIDS workers bravely facing all attacks are advancing.

No amount of attacks and assaults can stop the revolutionary growth of AIDS guided by invincible ideological weapon provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Statement

(Contd. from page 1) the least, is frivolous having no bearing with reality.

"The proposed recommendations like doubling the security deposit, enhancing the number of proposers and seconders to twenty, raising the minimum vote required for refund of security deposit and even disqualifying a candidate for a period of six years if unable to secure a minimum percentage of votes, among others will only help those forces who spend lavishly



Picture shows how SUCI office at Rourkella, Orissa was ransacked by police and CRP on December, 8.

Women's Demonstration organised by Mahila Sanskritik Sangha in Calcutta

On December 15th last, thousands of spectators in Calcutta witnessed a memorable event in the history of conscious socio-political movement, so far launched by the womenfolk of our country. On that day women in huge numbers from all over West Bengal came out to raise their voice of protest against the anti-people language and education policy of the Left Front Government and joined in the massive protest demonstration under the auspices of Mahila Sanskritik Sangha. It is significant that today in the face of this policy of the Government which is a severe blow to people's life thousands of women from all walks of social life have come out from the confines of their homes for the first time and have identified themselves with the call of Mahila Sanskritik Sangha.

The demonstrations assembled at Subodh Mallick Square where a meeting was held. The meeting was presided over

to anyhow get through the elections and who care a fig for the democratic norms, values and rights of the people.

"We strongly protest against these recommendations and urge the Central Government not to implement them in the interest of the people."

by Sm. Prativa Gupta, head mistress. Professor Menoka Basu Roy read out the memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister demanding withdrawal of the policy of abolishing English and no detention at the primary level, making the study of English and mother tongue compulsory at the degree level etc.

After the rally the participants marched in a large and disciplined procession towards Esplanade East. Beautifully decorated it was a vast sea of festoons and banners displaying the demands in bold letters.

The demonstration, led by Comrade Prativa Mukherjee, President of the organisation, Sm. Prativa Gupta, Comrade Badal Mukherjee, Comrade Usha Sen, Comrade Bakul Chowdhury, Comrade Krishna Sen, Malati Chakraborty, Comrade Indrani Halder and other district leaders, was stopped by police at Esplanade East.

A team of deputationist wanted to meet the Chief Minister and hand him over the memorandum but the Chief Minister refused to meet the deputation displaying his utter disregard and indifference towards the cause of common people.

Comrade Prativa Mukherjee addressed the gathering. In her analytical speech she said that the abolition of English at the Primary level would close the gateway of knowledge and higher education to the common people and the policy would result in class distinction in the society. She also condemned the cancellation of various elected bodies of universities, colleges and schools and appointment of members of the ruling parties to these committees.

Lastly she called upon all women of the state to develop a mighty democratic movement so as to resist this anti-people policy of the government.

Bokaro

(Contd. from page 5)

In the meeting, a memorandum signed by more than 10,000 people was handed over to Comrade N. R. Singh for placing it to the Bihar

Bilhan Sabha. Comrade Singh was the main speaker at the meeting attended by more than 2000 people.

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